

**County of Loudoun**  
**Department of Planning**  
**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** January 4, 2010  
**TO:** Stephen Garner, Project Manager, Land Use Review  
**FROM:** Kelly Williams, Planner, Community Planning

**SUBJECT: ZMOD 2008-0010, Ashburn Village Shopping Center Sign Plan, 2<sup>nd</sup> Referral**

**BACKGROUND**

This is the third submission of the application. The applicant has responded to second submission comments by providing a revised statement of justification, response letter and a revised Comprehensive Sign Plan dated December 10, 2009. The remaining outstanding issues are described below. This referral is intended to be supplementary to Community Planning's January 20, 2009 and July 15, 2009 referrals.

**OUTSTANDING ISSUES**

In the previous referrals, staff identified several areas where signage could be eliminated or reduced in size in order to reduce visual clutter and redundancy to be more consistent with the policies of the Plan.

- Eliminating the freestanding sign and reducing the number of directional signs for the individual pad sites would be more consistent with the Retail Plan policies.

The application has been revised to clarify that a total of three building signs and one freestanding sign would be allowed for each pad site along with a total of four directional signs per site. Staff continues to recommend that one of the identification signs (building or freestanding) be eliminated. ***This issue has not been adequately resolved.***

- The drive-thru signs being proposed are five times larger than what is permitted in the Zoning Ordinance and they are not in scale with the buildings. Staff also questions the need for two drive-thru signs for each restaurant.

The proposed signs have been reduced in size and are more in keeping with similar signage already existing in the retail shopping center. ***This issue has been resolved.***

- The Giant grocery store proposes a total of eight signs, three for Giant and five for subtenants. Five subtenant signs is excessive.

The application has been revised to clarify the number of sub-tenant signs, however the total number of signs for the Giant store has increased by one. Adding an additional sign does not reduce the visual clutter on the building façade. ***This issue has not been resolved.***

- Staff questions the need for end cap units to have three building-mounted signs. The sign shown on the rear of the building could be eliminated.

The applicant continues to request three building-mounted signs for end cap units. When looking at the sign package as a whole (which includes a total of two per tenant building-mounted signs, one per tenant canopy sign, two second floor building signs, one per second floor tenant sign, and nine signs for the Giant store) adding additional signage to the building is excessive. ***This issue has not been resolved.***

- It is noted that some of the directional signs propose advertising which may not be allowed in the Zoning Ordinance even through modification. Staff defers to the Zoning Department on this issue. Further, the amount of directional signage proposed is unnecessary as a site visit by staff revealed that all buildings in the shopping center were adequately visible to both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

The application has been revised to eliminate some of the proposed directional signs, limiting them to four per freestanding tenant. Staff continues to note that all of the buildings are highly visible throughout the site and four directional signs per individual pad sites would be unnecessary. Staff continues to recommend that the number of signs be reduced. ***This issue has not been adequately resolved.***

- Clarification is needed as to the type of Real Estate signs being proposed. It appears that each in-line building would be allowed two monument style signs and each pad site allowed one monument style sign (fourteen signs). This is an excessive number of freestanding monument signs.

The applicant clarified that six Real Estate freestanding monument signs are proposed. However, adding this to the amount of proposed freestanding monument signs for the entrances, (five are currently proposed) a total of eleven monument signs could encumber the perimeter of this retail center at any given time. Staff continues to recommend that the number of monument signs be reduced to avoid visual clutter. ***This issue has not been adequately addressed.***

- The application proposes temporary signage in the form of balloons, banners, pennants and inflated devices which is prohibited in the Zoning Ordinance. Staff defers to the Zoning Department on this issue.

The applicant has removed these types of signs from the application. ***This issue has been resolved.***

- The application is proposing that each tenant will have two flush-mounted building signs and one under the canopy sign. The application does not provide adequate justification as to the need for each tenant to have three signs.

The applicant continues to propose three signs per subtenant. When looking at the proposed building signage collectively (including first and second floor tenant signs, second floor building signs, end cap tenant signs, and under the canopy signs), the number and square footage of the signs per building is excessive. Staff recommends that only one flush-mounted tenant sign be permitted. ***This issue has not been adequately addressed.***

- An increase in signage for second floor tenants has also been requested. A general building identification sign is proposed along with a sign for each tenant on the second floor. Staff has concerns with the amount of signage proposed for the office portion of the building as it is unclear how many tenants could be located on the second floor. Signage should identify the building not each individual tenant.

The application has been revised to limit the number of tenant signs to four, and the number of building signs to two, which is three times the amount of signage allowed in the Zoning Ordinance. Staff continues to recommend that the number of signs be reduced. ***This issue has not been resolved.***

***As stated above, this shopping center is existing and is surrounded by the existing residential community of Ashburn Village. While an update of sign design and materials may be appropriate, given the nature of this community serving retail center and its visible location in the neighborhood, increasing the number and size of the signs would be excessive. Staff continues to recommend that the number of signs and sign size be reduced as outlined above.***

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The general concept of updating the signage for the Ashburn Village Shopping Center appears to be consistent with the guidelines found in the Revised General Plan and the Retail Plan for unified graphic design. However, at this time Community Planning staff is unable to support the Zoning Modification request for an increase in the amount and size of signage proposed.

cc: Julie Pastor, AICP, Planning Director  
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